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TAGS: OPRC KMDR FR

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - Iraq -

Greater Middle East

PARIS - Wednesday, January 18, 2006

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

Iraq  
Greater Middle East

(B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

Electronic media and several dailies lead this morning with the record sales of Airbus and Boeing in 2005. For left-of-center *Le Monde* this proves that passengers are flying again - especially to Asia and the Near East, and that "September 11 is behind us." Left-of-center *Liberation* asks: What would French foreign trade do without Airbus?" and answers: "Not much."

Both left-of-center *Le Monde* and right-of-center *Le Figaro* headlines with stories on Cote d'Ivoire and the violent demonstrations that are once again disrupting the peace in Abidjan.

In U.S.-related news, the execution of Clarence Allen is widely reported, drawing some commentary in the regional press. "Bush and Schwarzenegger's America has once again given us an illustration of its schizophrenia, of its outrageous impertinence in giving lessons in democracy to the rest of the world. 'Do as I say and not as I do' seems to be the new motto of this America that is steeped in religious righteousness, deaf to the rest of the world but also to those who, increasingly numerous in the U.S., call for a return to real democratic and authentically moral principles." (Jacques Guyon in *La Charente Libre*)

According to *Le Monde*, European sources say that Moscow may not vote for the transfer of the issue of Iran's nuclear program to the UNSC but will likely abstain: "This would mark a victory for the IAEA's strategy which aims to preserve the unity of the international community."

*Le Monde*'s U.S. correspondent reports the decrease in the number of American soldiers wounded in Iraq in the last year. (See Part C)

In *Le Monde*, Daniel Vernet criticizes the "New Zealots of Democracy." (See Part C)

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

Iraq

"Decrease in the Number of Soldiers Wounded"  
Left-of-center *Le Monde*'s New York correspondent Eric Leser writes (01/18): "The number of wounded American soldiers in Iraq has decreased by 26%. This could be due to the fact that the attacks are fewer but deadlier. But for the Pentagon it is because the Iraqi forces are better trained. Military experts however are not convinced and are once again wondering if the Pentagon is not confusing what it dreams of and reality. If there is no doubt that the Iraqi forces today are greater in number and better trained, their loyalty and willingness to fight are still in question."

Greater Middle East

"The New Zealots of Democracy"

Daniel Vernet in left-of-center *Le Monde* writes: "Since the dominating power (the U.S.) imposed its model for democratic change, the wisest thing to do is to abide by it. Especially when the power in question is perfectly happy with purely superficial change. Hosni Mubarak's Egypt is but one example. Most Europeans mocked George W. Bush's project for the Greater Middle East following the Iraqi adventure and they were not completely wrong to do so. The American Administration has done all it can to promote the spread of democracy in the world it has not, however, been able to rise above the

obstacles that face the process of democratization."  
STAPLETON